

é. 139,247
S. 138,409

Front
Page

Edit
Page

Other
Page

4
2

Date: NOV 24 1952

Washington Review

By BASCOM N. TIMMONS
The Times Herald Washington Bureau

Eisenhower's Helpers

Before the election, one of the apprehensions current among voters was said to be that Gen. Eisenhower, if elected, would sur-



Timmons

round himself with military men — meaning graduates of the United States Military Academy — as his principal aides, and thus establish a sort of military junta in the White House. Quite obviously, that fear was not as widespread as the reports indicated, and it is appropriate to point out that the President-Elect, in the instances where he places reliance upon Army associates, has leaned more upon non-West Pointers than graduates of the Academy.

He owed much of his success to his fellow General of the Army, George C. Marshall, who had considerable to do with his selection to lead our forces in Africa and Europe. He named as his chief of staff an obscure officer named Walter Bedell Smith, an old National Guardsman of World War I, who is now head of the Central Intelligence Agency, our most secret weapon for gathering information to protect our national security. Neither of these invaluable helpers ever went to the U. S. Military Academy.

Invaluable Assistant.

During the campaign, when both Marshall and Smith remained aloof from the presidential contest, another Army officer of demonstrated ability, but also lacking a West Point diploma, came to the fore as an invaluable Eisenhower assistant. He is Maj. Gen. William B. Persons (retired), 56-year-old native of Montgomery, Ala., who says he expects to have no part of the new administration, but whom the President-Elect's campaign associates sincerely hope will have a very important job.

Like his former chief, Persons came out of scholastic retirement as superintendent of Staunton Military Academy (Staunton, Va.) to assist Gen. Eisenhower on his return to Europe as head of NATO, and has been with him

Most Popular Aide.

Bearing such nicknames among his old Army associates as "Slick" and "Jerry," it can undoubtedly be said that Gen. Persons, among members of Congress, newspapermen and his old comrades at the Pentagon is probably more universally liked than any of the men around the President-Elect.

Like "Beetle" Smith, Persons became a second lieutenant in 1917, and stayed with the Army until his retirement in 1950. By that time he was a major general but in the interim, he had done a noteworthy job for the armed services. A handsome and personable officer (no pun intended) he had performed one of the most difficult assignments of the pre-war and postwar periods. He was liaison between the armed forces and Congress, a task which required infinite tact, knowledge and the kind of ability rarely found in military men.

Soothed Feudists.

On the Eisenhower campaign train, when fightin' and feudin' among the ambitious and sometimes befuddled top level advisers seemed to becloud the prospect of the Republican candidate's election, "Jerry" Persons—nobody seems to know how he got the nickname—straightened out many a snarl. He had the complete confidence of the mob of reporters who were along, and gave his old chief a quality of loyalty that seemed to transcend that of others of the chosen circle.

It was typical of General Persons that he should bow out at the end of the campaign, and announce that he did not expect any further assignment from Dwight D. Eisenhower. But the general opinion here is that the President-Elect will have a different idea.

Good Press Secretary.

The President-Elect's luck in having with him men of unusual competence in special positions extends to his campaign press secretary, James C. Hagerty, loaned by Gov. Thomas E. Dewey of New York, whose press relations Hagerty has handled since 1943. Hagerty is a general favorite of the folks who write the news, but even though he is only 43 years old, there may be one deterring factor to his acceptance of a White House appointment as press secretary. The two past White House secretaries have died within three years of heart attacks.

That may be coincidence, but do you think that the assignment of press secretary to the White House—even at \$18,000 a year—is anything to break your neck